

## THE PHILOSOPHY OF PUPPET CHARACTERS BATHARA IN MURWAKALA PLAY FOR THE VALUE OF LEADERSHIP ETHICS

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### Abstract

The study aims to find out the values of leadership ethics in Murwakala play, which is beneficial to society in empowering the existence of the puppet. The position of puppeteers in Central Java is now farther away from the younger generation and society. The preferred method is through an objective method to find out the design of performance according to contemporary tastes, as well as referring to the theory of structuralism in order to uncover the meaning of the textual and contextual performance. Method of observation, interview and documentation are also used, in order to get comprehensive data. The results showed the findings of the ethics of leadership from the teachings of puppet plays Murwakala Asthabrata or eight teachings contained in nature into eight figures in the play, which synergized with the nature of the universe, such as the nature of clouds, rain, water, stars, moon, sun, fire, ocean and earth. The findings are collaborative performances Murwakala played in the new format, according to contemporary tastes, semi-theatrical performances. Another finding is souvenirs designs and culinary business run with team leadership ethics, to enhance the creative industry and economy, establish a relationship with buyers and affiliated institutions, with a supporting program of stakeholders.

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**Keywords:** ethical values; leadership, puppets; Bathara; Murwakala.

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### INTRODUCTION

Traditional arts, known as *wayang kulit purwa*, have been recognized as a world cultural arts, and have been awarded a recognition by the United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) on November 7, 2003 as a Masterpiece of the Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity. A recognition from the international world that the art of puppets viewed as a masterpiece of non-object culture as a heritage for all mankind (UNESCO, 2003, p. 2). That is the moral responsibility of the Government of Indonesia is quite heavy, which should continue to submit to the cultural heritage for

generations. But, the reality of the practice indeed reversed, because there are not many people who appreciate the value of the noble legacy of its ancestors, both the value of ideology, historical values, moral values, as well as other positive values. A significant progress of information technology and national electronic and mass (7 stations), urban aesthetic standards demanded spectacle spectacular, glamorous, and slapstick as a joke - an urban setting - have been deliberate or not constitute a pressure into every corner of the country. After exclusion of rural areas served to the audience or the local arts began absorbed by the societies. The audience is reduced again due to two things (1) mass media at-

titude and broadcast attitude from big cities which look down on urban local arts - as something backward, and deserve to be laughed at, (2) the attitude of leaders of social and religious art that label the regional arts is not in accordance with religion and moral value. The classical arts are also under pressure, the disappearance aegis of the kingdoms of the past forced the art that grew in the palace looking for new sponsors from the public, media and art education institutions funded by the government.

The theory developed is the aesthetics and ethics in the context of understanding the values of morality in the puppet (Suseno, 1991, p. 27-45). Of course, the thoughts are based on structural approach that directly intersects with the social system as a multi-cultural situation of the current civilization (Sears, 1996, p. 121-135). The expected result is the reconstructed product

On puppet show, for example involving the maker of puppets, puppet accessories with themes of leadership, and souvenirs. This can not be removed with the handling of management as a model puppet show production in specific formats and marketing side (Silalahi, 1994, p. 161).

The Indonesian nation seems to need to overcome the various problems facing the nation today, ranging from political issues, economic, religious, social and cultural rights. Everywhere still encountered various conflicts, such as demonstrations and vandalism, and massive robbery (Metro TV, August 20, 2010), which caused deaths and serious injuries, blasphemy, also addressed to the leaders of the country. Citizens ask for justice, and firmness from the leaders. Natural disasters occur in all parts of Indonesia, which, if observed events appear in 26<sup>th</sup>, Tsunami, train collision, until the Mount Merapi erupts, what does it mean? Meaning, 2 plus 6 equals 8 divided by 4 equals two, which could be interpreted heart and thought. Heart and thought must be balanced, cannot stand alone, meaning that what human beings

think about, which is realized in action, must also be internalized by the heart, in order to obtain a balance mentally and physically, and life becomes serene and peaceful, not to cause flare in surroundings (Rustono, 2010, November 8, 2010). National competitive grant research strategy is based on six national strategic fields that had been proclaimed by the President in 2008, and was developed by *Direktorat Penelitian dan Pengabdian Masyarakat (DP2M)* into 12 themes. Themes of Art and Culture / Creative Industries (Art and Culture/ Creative Industry) are one of the selected research themes under the title Understanding

Ethical Values Leadership puppet plays Murwakala: Dissemination and Implementation for the Society. The theme proposed is consistent with what had been determined, because it was oriented in applied research and has a regional / national scale.

The inheritance of cultural values through the presentation of the arts is more directed to oral tradition, the more pressure it can be seen in the form of the development of imaginative, reflective, and dramatic, Burns (1973, p. 45-60) called the conventions of art that is attached directly to its form. Inheritance is really a matter that cannot be avoided in the modern era, such as the emergence of show variations that in accordance with the means and the context.

The research begins with literary research activities in particular Bathara from Murwakala puppet plays, then applied in the field with the condition of the performing arts that have been collaborating. Afterward, the design of works of art is arranged in an innovative format according to the demands of the audience, that mostly the younger generation.

Darnawi (1985, p. 32) points out that these values can be heard through the wise puppet figures and religious as well as from the utterances of Punokawan in puppet. The value has been attached to the individual interaction in a puppet life community. Values and the meaning of

life which became the paradigm of era civilization (Timur, 2006, p. 174). The values of tenderness also appear in art, pointed to the tenderness of heart that is embodied in wise behaviour, which is a way of life which guarantees human dignity as the main human beings (Sardjono, 1995, p. 23)

Lestari (2009, i) revealed that ethical leadership of figure Bathara from Murwakala puppet plays, containing philosophical values of life exemplified by a variety of puppet characters in it such as: character of Bathara Teacher, Bathara Endra, Bathara Bayu, Bathara Yama, Bathara Aqni, Bathara Kala and Dalang Kandabuwana and puppeteer who each have characters that can be a good model for a leader.

Preserving and responsible to the cultural heritage of ancestors, continually make great efforts in order to make puppets remain to be attracted to the younger generation. Therefore, in order to raise again the values of leadership to do with empowerment of the creative industries of art craft as well as encouraging community economy, research needs to be done by building a theory, and the new format puppet shows to fit the demands of the present generation. The Empowerment of the puppet masters who their current activity displaced by other forms of performance, bravely acting out puppet plays Murwakala. Encouraging the craftsman to collaborate each others in a performance event.

## METHOD

The subjects of the research were society, the puppet masters and souvenirs craftsman. Society as individuals and as leaders should understand and emulate the character of the puppet characters, who become Asthabrata tenet. The puppeteers dare to act out Murwakala plays.

The research object is the puppet show plays Murwakala, that the characters in the play are a symbol of leadership character.

The method used is an objective method, namely a way that describes the re-

search as there are materials that are used as objects of research, namely Murwakala puppet plays.

The analysis used is an object of research forms. Description: (2) Universe includes elements that affect the community social environment. Its form is the design and accommodation of the performance, namely the *ruwatan* ceremony with performance of leather puppet show Murwakala have been collaborating, in order to bring about a new shape or appearance, which involve players or characters that exist within the play, with the puppeteer and the audience. (2) Consisting of puppet spectators, participants of Ruwatan, or guests, arts observer organizations, who is invited to attend the show. (2) Artist or the players, and the characters in the play. (3) Trial Method is used to determine whether the work result has fulfilled the wishes and tastes of society. The effectiveness of trial method was determined by experts brought in the performance arts, performance arts observer, performance art critics, cultural and arts practitioners of puppetry. The aim is to explore the input to the refinement and improvement of the artwork design. (4) Socialization Method, is one way of introducing the product of artwork design to the public, in accordance with the concept that has been implemented, through seminars that bring the relevant participants/stakeholders.

The steps are as follows.

1. Arranging Murwakala puppet play script.
2. Composing musical singing of puppet show
3. Arranging staging draft, techniques and procedures
4. Exercises
5. Text reading by puppeteer
6. Appreciation of figures
7. Joint exercises between the puppeteer and the musical accompaniment
8. Performance testing
9. Evaluation
10. Preparation of reports including documentation of testing.

In order to realize the design that has

been prepared, it needs to do an observation both on the location of the show as well as the players involved in the show. Observations of the location can be conducted either outdoor or indoor.

Trial method is also intended to determine whether the work design result has met the wishes of society, such as hold and offer *ruwatan* ceremony to the public, campuses, or tourism place, so there will be found input or refinement and improvement of artworks in the future.

### Interview

Interviews were conducted to the informant such as puppet masters in the Central Java region, with samples taken from puppeteers in Semarang included Ki JokoEdan, and Ki Sayuti, KiSuprpto, from Surakarta Ki Suyanto, and from Yogyakarta Ki Timbul Hadi Prayitno. The results of observations were cross checked with the references as well as findings related to literary form, observation and practice in the field related to the show.

### Documentation

Documentation was recording the action of the Murwakala leather puppet show, and then translated it, both in each scene, as well as the characters within the play. The results of the translation, further interpreted, thus found the values that exist in the show including the characters in it, like a figure of eight gods. This eight Gods character then so called HastaBratatenet, which is a guidance that can be inspired by everyone in his life, especially in the concept of leadership.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### The Design form of Murwakala Plays

Designing the puppet show is not making it up that the puppet is still a mainstay in the delivery of a certain material, expectedly to contribute to the general public about various things related to contemporary problems or issues of government programs and the wishes or expectations of massive societies. The ot-

her interests are giving the improvement of appreciation to the audience about the art of leather puppet Purwa which also conveyed the content of the moral values of leadership represented by the presence of puppet characters who play in Murwakala, so that people can take lessons from the show, which be able to apply in daily life in the future.

The design objective is to create an alternative leather puppet show that is called Murwakala along with other buffer. The result of designing performance becomes a means of enlightenment, education, and entertainment that focuses on the universal problems encountered in daily life. Without having to leave the grip of puppet show, the show was designed in collaboration with other art forms outside of the art of puppetry. Not excluding it will be included also all the sporting programs tailored to the unity of the whole chosen themes, so it is possible to involve the other types of arts.

The design is as follows:

1. The form of the puppet is leather puppet carved in a simple flat
2. The characters involved in a puppet show Murwakala
3. The use of Javanese Gamelan with special arrangement as musical accompaniment in the show
4. At the end of the design is the presentation of the textbook which is ready to be staged by any puppeteer who is interested.

### Procedures of Design

In this section the activities started by designing a variety of devices that have been planned to include:

#### *The first stage*

1. Plotting particular puppet character played by human figures such as Kala Bathara figures, Derma Derma and UlamDermi, as well as JokoJatusmati figures, and the figures of puppeteer Kanda Buwana, provided approximately 10 puppets.
2. Arranging the script which lately sta-

ged completely. The collaboration between the puppeteer who plays shadow puppet and dialogue with Murwakala played by the people.

3. Arranging music to accompany the show
4. Technique plan of puppet plays stage with Murwakala as the main figure
5. Socialized to the public, students, academics and the puppet masters and artists, the activity is assumed as Legen Tuesday night activity in UNNES, and had been held on November 8<sup>th</sup>, 2010.

### *The Second Stage*

1. The main figure of the stage basically contains the main idea that must be delivered through the figure's trip, groups, and community. Then it is poured into the plot and scenes in the overall play. The basic idea of the Murwakala puppet play stage is like to give enlightenment and public information about the existence of the character, in Javanese culture, Bathara Kala is a symbol of catastrophe and misfortune spreader. Up with the 21<sup>st</sup> century, such play related to sacred ceremonies are still performed, either in massive or individually.
2. The central themes of Murwakala puppet plays, is a comprehensive understanding of the existence of Bathara Kala as a symbol of catastrophe that should be avoided by people. The spiritual value contained in the figure is a puppet of enlightenment for the audience, as well as the concepts of leadership, such as how a person should be able to hold the promise that has been uttered, loyalty to the job.
3. Then the theme of leadership is poured into the structure of the presentation of puppet plays, so the source of the presentation based on the convention of Purwa shadow puppetry as can be found in the community. Furthermore, step by step, the story of Bathara Kala flow to the daily story by presenting public figures, such as community leaders, Kyai Ageng Buyut Wangken as

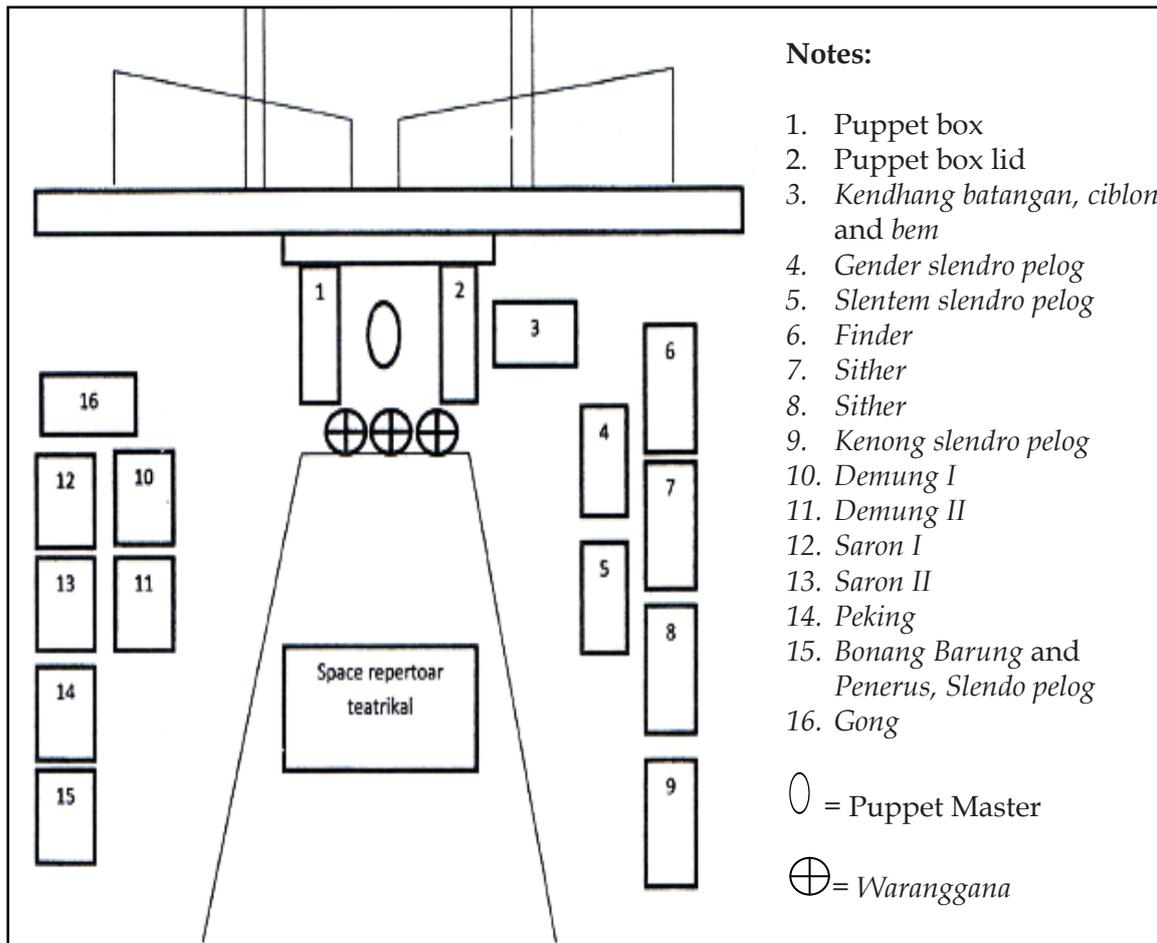
an authoritative figure of the leader in a community, and simple figures that can be played by another player who has been plotted or spontaneous players from the spectators.

4. Bathara Guru should go directly to the world to give examples of his leadership to people about how to dispel the existence of Kala.
5. The eight Gods, which in Javanese culture symbolized as so-called Asthabrata tenet (8 behavior) eight characters that can be inspired by people, from the eight Gods' characters, which later, the element of number 8 (eight) synergized with eight elements of nature characters, including the nature of water, fire, wind, moon, stars, oceans, clouds and sun, from the eight natural properties can be used as the teaching of leadership to the community, leadership inspired from nature could be a guidance for a good life. The presence of Bathara Guru necessarily has to work hard to give enlightenment to the human the ways of dealing with problems of daily life. Of course, the desire of evil Bathara Kala, will take all Sukerta's children will run smoothly because of the existence of Bathara Kala, through this figure of Kandhabuwana puppeteer, the secret of the existence of Kala can be undermined by human beings. All elements of the Murwakala story plays is applied to the show structure combined with the form of arts outside the art of puppetry. The stage arrangement of Murwakala puppet plays can be seen in the scheme as follows.

### **Ethical Dimension of Murwakala Puppet Play**

The results of study shows there were value of leadership ethics in Murwakala puppet plays, which emerged from the eight characters in the play. The research findings are also supported by the Sutarjo opinion (2006, p. 50-119).

The finding that strengthens the eight God's characters synergized with the con-



**Figure 1.** The Stage Arrangement of Murwakala Puppet Place

dition of the natural character that must be watched out and understood by the public. The value of leadership ethics can also be found from the Murwakala puppet play, one meaning of words can be seen is Murwa that means managing and Kala means time, so Murwakala mean show to respect the time, the respect of time is one key to success. Another key to success is if people could be disciplined, discipline starts from leading to himself and continue to lead on a wider scale. The tenet of leadership can be explored through the puppet figures, which over the puppet characters, we would know its nature and character, which can be a good model in daily life. One of the tenets of Javanese culture is called Asthabrata which is an ethics code of leadership, since the previous time till now, even when the future still remains

relevant to be learned and applied, and observed by anyone, who wants to have the soul of leadership, though he is not as a formal leader in an institution. Every individual is essentially a leader for himself/herself.

Astabrata tenet is not only learned through written literature, but also through art performance. In the art performance/show, the tenet is shown from the symbolic figures with leadership character. Leadership character is assembled from the eight gods' character that is as representative of natural objects' character

The lead character refers to the eight Gods' character such as: the Endra God, the Surya God, the Bayu God, the Kuwera God, the Baruna God, the Yama God, the Chandra God and the Brama God. The eighth character of the God is also synchro-

nized or in line with the character of natural objects such as: the nature of the earth, water or ocean, fire, wind, sun, moon, stars, and cloud. According to community development, the nature or eight-Gods' character that at first became the leader's characteristic only has been developed in general guidance for all people without any exception, is that one should be able to become the sun, capable as the moon, a star, the earth, water, could be a tree, could become wind, and capable of being cloud for others. The consequence is that if any of those characters are not owned, it will be handicapped for human.

The discussion of puppet show design is not making it up that puppet is still a mainstay in the delivery of a certain material, with the hope to contribute to the general public about various things related to contemporary problems or issues of government programs as well as the wishes and expectations of the larger society. Other interests are enhancing audience's appreciation to the art of shadow/leather puppet which conveys the message of leadership moral values represented by the presence of puppet characters that play in Murwakala, so that people can take lessons from the show which can be applied in daily life.

## CONCLUSION

The creation and design of Bathara from Murwakala puppet plays, the setting of the main figure tells about the events and issues of daily life. Reminding that the art of puppet show has a standard or reference, then the system in presenting Murwakala as the main figure cannot be abandoned. This means that elements such as puppet show setting, gamelan, singing, and main figure structures become a very important consideration.

The story of puppet play can be a means for the puppeteer to convey thoughts, feelings and responses of an event that happened in the real world. For example, most of the puppeteer has to do, namely as an aspiration for development, so that

through the characters of puppet show, puppeteer addresses the issue of family planning, building construction, religion, advances in technology and ethics or aesthetics, according to his abilities and mastermind's creation. Frequently, also various nuisance of environment is manifested into Dolanan song, dialogue between characters, without bothering the puppet story structure presented.

The theme design of Murwakala story revolves around the events and issues of everyday life. Given the art of puppet show has a grip, then the system plays Murwakala presentation cannot be abandoned. This means that elements such as setting buffer in the show of puppets, gamelan, singing, and structures play a very important consideration.

The design of the Murwakala puppet play show is unlike traditional stage sets, this was done because the concept of the show was collaborated with other art forms, then the consideration of place and space arrangement of the stage is adjusted with the aim of the show. Two barrel Slendro and Pelog of gamelan divided into two parts arranged in a row, right behind the puppeteer provided a space for theatrical scenes, so that the arrangement requires more space than a traditional stage.

The Asthabrata tenet is not only learned through written literature, but also through the art performance show. In the show, the tenet is presented from symbolic figures with the lead character. It refers to the eight gods' characters that constitute the eight characters of natural objects.

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